



The justification for inclusive education in Australia

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Abstract This article discusses the justification for inclusive education in Australia, whilst being cognizant of the wider international landscape. Separate educational provision is increasing in many countries, including Australia. Inclusive education has plateaued to a degree with demand increasing for non-inclusive settings. There are three main components to the argument for and against inclusive education and these are the educational, social, and the economic justification. There is clear evidence that inclusive education in Australia can be justified across these areas. There is a dearth of evidence that inclusive education is less than beneficial for all students in mainstream schools. In fact, studies show that there is an economic advantage to being fully inclusive, but this should not be seen as an opportunity for cost saving in the education sector but rather as proper deployment of resources to ensure effective education for all students no matter what their background. The evidence for social and educational benefits is vast with both parents and students reporting positive outcomes. Inclusive education can be fraught with difficulties, but this article clearly shows the positive justification for inclusive educational environments.

Keywords Inclusive education · Justification · Australia · Educational inequality · Special education

Inclusive education is a firmly established and recognised part of educational discourse and policy in Australia and has been for more than quarter of a century. As this special issue considers the developments and challenges of inclusive education around the world, this article will primarily focus on inclusive education in Australia. What *actually* constitutes

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inclusive education has been the subject of various levels of debate, from both a practical (Boyle et al. 2013; Varcoe and Boyle 2014; Hoskin et al. 2015; Page et al. 2019) and a philosophical (Anderson and Boyle 2020a, b) viewpoint. Yet, Richler (2012, p. 177) laconically states “Inclusive education is good education”, nothing more, nothing less. From this paradigm, the implementation of good inclusive education practice necessitates high-quality teaching approaches as well as positive social interactions that respond to the educational needs of all students. Richler’s assertion that the implementation of inclusive practices within an inclusive environment is commensurate with enacting “good” education is a simple declaration that belies the complexity tied up in the notions of both “inclusive” and “good” education. While an in-depth exploration of these constructs and the relationships between them is beyond the scope of this article, it does bring to the fore the difficulties that arise in the strive for a simple solution to what has been described as the ‘wicked problem’ of inclusive education (Armstrong 2017).

Arriving at a consensus as to what inclusive education should look like is not straightforward and the debate has been both controversial and polemic. Many attempts have been made to define inclusive education, yet, even the staunchest advocates of the construct admit that the most widely accepted definitions, such as those proffered in the 2016 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are ambiguous and open to interpretation (Graham 2020). To that end, Slee (2011) argues the focus should move away from seeking a definitive definition for inclusive education to the elimination of exclusive educational practices, as this is perhaps a more discernible place to begin. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests this shift has yet to take place.

Many countries are still grappling with being able to articulate a coherent and consistent approach to inclusion, which has impacted the success of its implementation (Schwab et al. 2018). Inclusive education in its absolute form requires that all students, irrespective of ability, are educated in their local school through the provision of appropriate practices, pedagogies, and resources. Topping (2012) suggests “...inclusion implies celebrating the diversity and supporting the achievement and participation of all pupils who face learning and/or behaviour challenges of any kind, in terms of socio-economic circumstances, ethnic origin, cultural heritage, religion, linguistic heritage, gender, sexual preference, and so on” (p. 13). This broad understanding of inclusive education as being about all students is a shift away from the special education roots (Ainscow 2020) and is now widely accepted within the literature. Yet, there remain scholars who adhere to the notion of inclusive education being bound to special education and who argue it should be considered as a continuum of support (from special school placement, through to full-time attendance in a classroom at the local school, and everything in between) afforded to students with varying educational needs associated with disability (Kauffman et al. 2020). While it is important to acknowledge this perspective, it is not the lens through which inclusive education is considered here. Rather, inclusive education in Australia is interrogated from the understanding that it is a construct which denotes that all students should be educated together, within their local schools.

A discussion about the justifications for inclusive education is timely. Internationally, policymakers are struggling in their efforts to develop and implement reform that ensures successful and sustainable inclusive education; meanwhile the number of students with diverse learning needs entering schools is on the increase (Schwab et al. 2018). In fact, it has been argued by Boyle and Anderson (2020) that the notion of inclusive education has reached a pivotal point, as many countries have reached an inclusivity plateau, or have, as is the case in Australia, become less inclusive, in recent years (e.g., in the UK, Norwich and Black 2015; in Australia, Anderson and Boyle 2019). Before presenting an argument

for inclusive education, it is necessary to situate the reader within the context of the current educational climate in Australia and interrogate what is happening under the guise of inclusion.

An increasingly *unequal* society

Australia was one of the first nations to ratify the Salamanca Statement and adopt the philosophy of inclusive education for students with disabilities (Anderson and Boyle 2015). Since this time, the term “inclusive education” has broadened to encapsulate the education of all students, and this is reflected in the most recent Education Declaration (a national declaration that outlines the educational goals for students across Australia), which dictates that Australian Governments “must provide all young Australians with equality of opportunity that enables them to reach their potential and achieve their highest educational outcomes” (Education Council 2019, p. 17). There is much work to be done. In 2018, an OECD report identified Australia as sitting equal fourth (out of 36 countries in the OECD) in a ranking of segregated schooling systems, with the educational attainment gap between students from advantaged backgrounds and those from disadvantaged backgrounds one of the highest in the OECD (OECD 2018). This is reflected in evidence that suggests one in three students from disadvantaged backgrounds does not meet key developmental milestones in their first year of schooling compared to only one in five of their advantaged peers (Smith Family 2016). This disparity continues into early adulthood; at age 24, fewer than three in five adults from disadvantaged backgrounds are in full time education, training or work, while for their advantaged contemporaries, this figure is more than four in five (Smith Family 2016). It is not only educational attainment that is of concern for this group of students. Evidence suggests that students from disadvantaged or minority group backgrounds in Australia are more likely to be diagnosed with a disability or disorder, educated within a segregated setting (Anderson and Boyle 2019), and/or receive disciplinary action such as suspension or exclusion (Armstrong 2018).

The impact on life outcomes as a result of the educational gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students and/or those from minority groups in Australia is significant. Educational attainment has been linked to income, social participation and health outcomes (OECD 2018). Unsurprisingly, students at the lower end of educational attainment in Australia are more likely to experience poverty, social exclusion, and/or have poor health outcomes. There is stark evidence to support this claim. Income inequality has grown in Australia since the turn of the century (ACOSS and UNSW 2018) and a report released in 2020 identified 13.6 per cent of the country’s population as living below the poverty line (ACOSS and UNSW 2020). People unable to gain employment, or sufficient employment, due to a lack of educational attainment and/or a small number of other factors such as disability, comprise this group almost entirely (ACOSS and UNSW 2018). As a consequence, there has been a “small” but “sustained” increase in social exclusion since 2012, with a greater percentage of people unable to participate in the “economic and social activities of a community” (Australian Government 2018, p. 107). This group is also at greater risk of incarceration as people with a disability, a mental health disorder, and/or from low socio-economic or indigenous backgrounds are all significantly over-represented in Australia’s prison populations (HRW 2018). Given the challenges already discussed here it is not surprising to find that this group of people also experiences both a significantly higher rate of chronic health issues and a lower life expectancy (National Indigenous Australians Agency

2020; AIHW 2020). Plato's declaration that "it's the direction given by education that is likely to determine all that follows" (Plato 2007, p. 127), made more than 2000 years ago, inarguably resonates with what the current evidence suggests.

Despite the correlation between poor educational attainment and poor life outcomes, it is unreasonable to place responsibility for the elimination of societal issues, such as those presented here, solely at the feet of education systems. To do so would negate the obligations that must be carried by those with the power to create and enact change, such as governments and the influential elite (Apple 2015). Yet, education systems, and the schools that operate within them, do have a role to play (Thomson et al. 2012). This responsibility is acknowledged in many educational policies globally where the social justice principles of inclusive education abound in policy rhetoric (Boyle and Anderson 2020; Anderson et al. 2020), though often without much pragmatic substance. It has become what Slee (2018) describes as "an empty language" (p. 20). This sentiment aptly describes the current state of play in Australia, where inclusive education has been at the forefront of educational policy for more than a quarter of a century, yet the nation's education system is more segregated and exclusive than ever before. The obvious question to ask here is: Why?

Challenges facing inclusive education in Australia

In addition to the complexities of the construct itself, inclusive education has faced some unique challenges in Australia. While it is beyond the scope of this article to interrogate these in any depth, two are worth noting here to illustrate the complex nature of educational provision in Australia.

The first pertains to the governance of schooling across Australia, a complicated and oftentimes perplexing phenomenon (Dinham 2008), particularly given Australia is a nation of less than 26 million people. Anderson and Boyle (2019) describe it like this:

Australia has three well defined, and very separate, education sectors – the government-run sector (state or public schools), and the non-government sector which comprises both independent and Catholic schools. These schools operate within each of the eight states and territories and funding this schooling system is an intricate process. The majority of funding for the government sector comes from the states and territories, with the Australian Government a minority public funder of this sector. The Australian Government is the major public funder for non-government schools, with state and territory governments providing minority public funding. (p. 798)

Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that in 2019, 65 per cent of Australian students who were enrolled in schooling attended government-run schools, 20 per cent attended Catholic schools and the remaining 15 per cent attended schools within the independent sector (ABS 2020). In addition to the complexities noted above, each educational jurisdiction is required to interpret national legislation and policy, and in turn develop their own policy, funding models and reform agendas to be enacted across relevant schools. A small number of these apply to schools within each of the three sectors that operate within the educational jurisdiction, but many are specifically designed by the state, independent, or Catholic systems for their own school populations. This has proven problematic for inclusive education, as what constitutes an educational need differs between states and sectors, as do the models of response and funding. Despite a recent review that recommended a national, needs-based funding approach

to resourcing education, inclusive education (see Gonski et al. 2018), the model has remained relatively unchanged. In essence, a student in Australia can be recognised as having a specific educational need in one state or sector and receive support to access their local school, yet, if they were to move across a border into another state or to a school in a different sector, they may no longer receive any educational support at all (Boyle and Anderson 2014).

The second challenge concerns the direction of educational reform taken by successive Australian governments in recent decades. Rather than adopting the principles of social justice to guide the reform agenda, governments have embraced principles of neoliberalism. Terms such as standardization, measurement and market choice have become part of everyday educational discourse, and it was from within this doctrine that a standardized national curriculum, a nation-wide testing regime, and a tool to compare schools emanated. Each of these pieces of reform has presented its own set of challenges for inclusive education, which, given the counterintuitive nature of social justice and neoliberalism, is unsurprising.

The inception of a standardized national curriculum raised many issues, not least the ruling about what was included in the curriculum and what was left out, and this debate continues into the current decade; the curriculum does not fairly represent “Western Civilization” (Cairns 2018); the curriculum does not contain enough religious content (Statham 2014); the curriculum does include enough indigenous history (Foley and Muldoon 2014); the curriculum does not contain enough queer content (Jagose et al. 2019); the curriculum does not meet the needs of students with a disability (Bonati et al. 2014). Decisions about what was included and what was not were made by those with the power to do so (Mulcahy 2008), and therefore will work for some students, but not others. Artiles (2003) argues that within any standardized curriculum there will be “winners and losers” (p. 166) and it is those from disadvantaged and/or minority groups who are most commonly the losers. As Anderson and Boyle (2019) deduced, “students whose experiences align with the curriculum will be the ‘winners’, and those students who do not fit within the context of the curriculum, will be the ‘losers’” (p. 801). A recent study on the national curriculum found that despite the inclusive rhetoric spouted within the pages of the national curriculum (ACARA 2020), “educators continue to debate the extent to which the AC [Australian Curriculum] is accessible for all students” (McMillan et al. 2018, p. 127).

Alongside the implementation of the national curriculum was the rollout of a nation-wide testing regime, National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This high-stakes test (Mayes and Howell 2018) captures data from students at two yearly intervals and the results influence policy direction, both at the national and state/territory level. There has been much conjecture about NAPLAN from the outset (Hardy and Boyle 2011), and while an in-depth exploration of this is beyond the scope of this article, one issue in particular is significant for inclusive education – access and participation. Few adjustments are permitted to support students to access the tests. While work has been done to progress this issue, students are still not able to access the supports they would in the classroom, and therefore the situation arises where those who have an understanding of a concept may not be able to successfully demonstrate their knowledge. As a result (though it must be acknowledged this is not the sole reason), participation rates have been declining steadily, with students from disadvantaged and/or minority groups making up the largest proportion of those who do not sit the test (Dempsey and Davies 2013). While this may not be a concern of itself, given the high-stakes nature of the test, it is problematic. Statistically significant numbers of students, the majority of whom have some form of educational

need, are not having their data counted in the collation of information that is used to inform education policy.

Just as the national curriculum and NAPLAN were under development, so too was a website known as My School. The premise behind the site, which provides both academic and demographic data for every school across Australia, as well as a comparison tool, was choice (Hardy and Boyle 2011). The prime minister at the time, Kevin Rudd, declared it would allow parents to “vote with their feet” when determining where to send their children (Riddle 2017); they could choose a school based on results, on peer group, or both (Rowe and Lubienski 2017). Yet, this notion of choice presupposes two conditions; it assumes all parents are in an equal position to both make a choice about the quality of their child’s schooling (Hutchings 2017) and have the financial means to act on their decision. It goes without saying that this is not the case. For inclusive education, this is problematic. Students who are deemed to be “lower achievers” or who do not fit behavioural or social norms are more likely to attend “poorer performing” schools (Ainscow 2010), which perpetuates the cycle of lower performance for both students and schools (Hutchings 2017). As a result, “the disadvantaged are being segregated into struggling schools so that the burden of lifting up the most disadvantaged is not evenly spread across schools, sectors, and locations” (Bonnor 2019, p. 2). The Grattan Institute, an influential public policy think tank in Australia, noted that, while increased competition was beneficial for some sectors, education was not one of them (Jensen 2013), yet this notion retains its place within the nation’s current educational zeitgeist.

Acknowledging and understanding the challenges that face successful inclusive education practice in Australia is imperative. Without this knowledge it is too easy to lay blame for the increasing rates of segregation and exclusion at the feet of inclusion, to position the construct as an unattainable utopian ideal. Yet, it is evident from the brief discussion here that inclusive education has not been permitted to thrive. Despite this, educators, researchers, and organizations globally continue to advocate for inclusive education to be the premise of education for all students, and there is much evidence to suggest this stance is justified. Australia, as stated in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council 2019), has a responsibility to provide an equitable and quality education to all students. The principles of inclusive education afford an opportunity to achieve this, and justification for this approach can be considered from an educational, social and economic position.

Educational justification

An optimum learning environment benefits all students and few, if any, would argue this point. Yet, understanding what this should or could look like has been the focus of much research globally, and still a consensus as to what constitutes a “good” education, an inclusive education, for all students, has not been reached. It must be acknowledged that this is not an easy task, particularly within the current zeitgeist which has seen the appetite for evidence-based solutions to the “wicked problem” of “inclusive education” grow (Boyle et al. 2020a, b, c). Slee (2018) suggests that the situation may be exacerbated by the fact that many schools, systems, and governments put on a good outward impression of being inclusive, when the actuality is very different, and this is the case across much of Australia (Graham 2020). It is difficult to claim an education system is working for everyone when 17 per cent of all students, who come from predominantly disadvantaged and/or minority

groups, finish their schooling without achieving a basic level of educational skill (OECD 2015). There is still work to be done.

Loreman et al. (2010) found that the strength of teaching in Australian schools was the key factor in being able to predict student achievement. Teachers who are able to adapt and strengthen their own practice in an inclusive environment need to be properly facilitated and resourced to ensure that quality teaching is promoted through inclusive environments. In Australia this is linked to teacher training and the necessity to improve pre-service teachers' preparedness for teaching across a range of learning ability. Various Australian studies indicate that pre-service teachers are generally supportive of inclusion, but a lack of training and experience means that many new teachers find teaching in inclusive environments challenging (Costello and Boyle 2013; Hoskin et al. 2015). Ongoing professional learning opportunities for in-service teachers are also paramount, as good pedagogical practice that utilizes different modalities of learning benefits all students (Loreman et al. 2011). Boyle et al. (2011) describe this as the "*professional positive* of inclusive practice" (p. 73). It follows that an improvement in teaching practice would benefit all students.

Mitchell (2020) found that students from disadvantaged or minority groups gain academically from being in an inclusive environment, and evidence suggests they outperform their peers in special education environments (Topping 2012). De Bruin (2020) argues that evidence from within Australia indicates that inclusive environments promote educational benefits across the core areas of language, literacy and numeracy, as well as in broader areas of cognitive skill development. However, it is not only students from disadvantaged groups who profit from inclusive schools, despite concerns raised in some of the literature. An often-presented argument against including students from all backgrounds and learning needs in mainstream classes is that they will hold back the learning of other students in the class and/or take up more teaching time and a greater portion of the resources (Webster and Blatchford 2019). Yet, research from within Australia and elsewhere belies this notion (e.g., Ruijs 2017; Topping 2012). Rich and diverse pedagogies employed through varying modalities naturally promote and support the learning of a wide group of students (De Bruin 2020). While it goes without saying that different students will require different amounts of support to successfully access different parts of the curriculum, the heterogeneity of the inclusive classroom benefits all students, academically (Szumski et al. 2017).

Social justification

Inclusion is about much more than just academic outcomes. Inclusive schools are intended to change attitudes to difference by educating all students together (Schwab 2017); a concept fundamental to the overarching social justice paradigm from which inclusive education emanated (Dixon and Verenikina 2007). Engagement at school has been established as a meaningful predictor of future engagement in society (OECD 2010), as positive social interactions at school have a direct influence on the social participation of students once they entre adulthood (Graham 2020). This is of particular importance in a country such as Australia, where, as noted previously, the gap between the haves and the have nots is growing, and as a consequence, so are issues around social participation.

There are particular groups of students for whom the current way of schooling in Australia does not work (Bills and Howard 2017). For some this means segregation into a separate educational provision, generally on the grounds of disability or behaviour, while for others it leads to failure and/or disengagement. Regardless of how this is enacted, it can have a significant impact on the transition to post school and further education and/or employment opportunities (Mays et al. 2020). Each student excluded from mainstream

schooling is at risk of becoming “othered” by their peers, teachers and society, as they have been categorized as not fitting within the parameters of “the norm” (Algraigay and Boyle 2017; Arishi and Boyle 2017; Lauchlan and Boyle 2020). Othering is problematic. It reinforces patterns of prestige and privilege (Mac Ruairc 2013) and perpetuates the oppression of excluded groups (Freire 2005). While this must be challenged, the mere presence of heterogeneous groups of students within the same school is not enough. In Australia, De Bruin (2020) contends that the social benefits of inclusive education “do not arise from merely being in the same school or classroom, but rather it is the nature of the contact that makes an impact” (p. 65). Integration is not enough. Change in social outcomes for students from disadvantaged and/or minority groups requires effective inclusive practices.

The attitudes of students who have additional support needs to inclusive environments, or in fact any forms of schooling, is an under researched area internationally and nationally (Schwab et al. 2018). While it is acknowledged that research with students from disadvantaged and/or monetary groups can be problematic, it is the students themselves who live the experience and they need to be given a voice and their stories understood. The small number of studies that have been conducted have focused on schooling only (Kvalsund and Bele 2010; Markusson 2004), specific domains (e.g., behavioural difficulties), conditions (Humphrey and Lewis 2008), or particular aspects of participants’ present lives (e.g., economic independence). However, two themes do recur: (i) those who attended specialist provision often experience stigma in later life, and (ii) those who attended mainstream schools are likely to experience some form of social isolation (Hardcastle et al. 2018). What is not clear from the research is whether students attending the mainstream schools were sufficiently supported within what could be described as truly inclusive environments, and the findings reiterate the importance of this. In an international study which took a different approach, Allan et al. (2009) interviewed students without additional educational needs. This study found participants were positive about inclusive education, as they iterated the importance of being educated within a heterogeneous group of students that was reflective of the wider communities in which they would live, work, and socialize as adults.

Parents of students with disabilities have also recognized the influence of inclusive education on social outcomes. A study of parental attitudes to inclusion in Australia indicated that one of the positive aspects of inclusion of children in mainstream schooling was on their social development (Stevens and Wurf 2020). The findings of the study reported that the connections with peers without additional needs helped with confidence building and sense of belonging. The influence of parents in insisting what type of educational provision their children receive is important. If parents continue to promote the positives of inclusive education, along with other advocates, pressure will mount on educational systems and policymakers to provide the reform that is necessary to allow inclusive schools to thrive (Anderson and Boyle 2020).

Economic justification

To appreciate the full economic case for inclusive education, two distinct but equally important aspects must be considered. First, the cost of inclusive education itself, when compared to the current structure of educating students with additional educational needs, must be explored, and second, the cost of post-school outcomes for the aforementioned students also warrants consideration.

Information pertaining to the cost of educating students with additional educational needs in inclusive versus segregated settings is scarce, and it is, therefore, necessary to

rely on international studies and make comparisons with Australia where possible. A small number of studies that have interrogated the cost of inclusion versus segregation models of education found inclusive education to be either a more cost effective, or cost equivalent, way of educating students with additional needs (e.g., Odom et al. 2001). Fundamental to the paucity of research in this area is the complexity of the many education funding models that exist across education systems globally (European Agency 2016). This is of particular significance in Australia, given the intricacies of the model of funding discussed previously, and it is not surprising that specific data pertaining to this notion is difficult to obtain. Still, through the assemblage of different data sets it is possible to glean some idea of what the costs of inclusion and segregation are in Australia. A 2011 report (Synergies Economic Consulting 2011), commissioned by the Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit (AEIOU), presented findings on the cost of educating students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the State of Queensland. When paired with corresponding data from this state (Department of Education and Training 2011), an interesting representation of the cost of inclusion versus segregation emerges. At the time of the report, the average cost of educating every student without a disability in Queensland state schools was around AUD 10,000. However, it should be noted that the cost of educating a student with ASD within a mainstream school was approximately two and half times this amount, the cost of educating a student in a special school was approximately four times as much as that of the students without a disability. For a student in a detention centre, this figure was almost five times as high. It should be noted here that students who receive their education in special school or detention centre environments may have different educational needs to those students with ASD educated in a mainstream school. Yet, the significance of the cost differentiation between inclusive and segregated settings in Queensland cannot be ignored and goes some way to dispelling the notion that inclusive education is the more expensive option. Further work is needed in this area.

Global institutions such as the World Bank (Hoff and Pandey 2004) and the OECD (2010) have been advocating for inclusive education as a shift towards more equitable education, for many years. This is because educational inequality is “bad for the economy” (ACOSS and UNSW 2018, p. 14), and the high economic cost becomes starkly evident when considered from the perspective of those for whom the education system fails. Students in various countries, who disengage from or do not experience success at school, for whatever reason, are more likely as adults to have lower incomes, poorer housing (Topping 2012), higher rates of mental health or other health issues, lower life expectancies (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010), increased instances of substance abuse, engage in anti-social behaviour, and end up in the justice system (Henry et al. 2012; Gamble et al. 2015). Notwithstanding the ethical concerns that surround these issues, they come with a high economic and social cost to society (OECD 2010, 2015). It stands to reason that an education system that is responsive to the needs of all students within an inclusive culture has the potential to break cycles of disadvantage (Snow and Powell 2012) and reduce the inequality gap that currently exists. This would, through an increase in the knowledge and skills of a greater number of people, lead to increased innovation and productivity, and subsequently to long-term economic viability (OECD 2010) – an outcome that benefits everyone.

Whether considered from the viewpoint of the cost of education itself, or from the longer-term cost to society, the economic evidence for inclusive education stacks up. Systems and schools that are flexible and responsive to the needs of all students are not only just as, if not more, efficient in their operational costs, the delivery of education in this way supports better life outcomes for students from disadvantaged and/or minority groups. In

a nation where the high cost of education and of increasing rates of disadvantage are two perennial topics within the political discourse, inclusive education could be the answer.

Conclusion

Two things are clear from the discussion and evidence put forward in this article. First, Australia is a society at risk of becoming increasingly unequal and segregated, unless something changes. Second, inclusive education is a construct that can go some way to moving the nation forward in a more socially just and equitable direction. While justified, inclusive education faces many challenges. Current reform agendas in Australia situate inclusive education against, rather than alongside, other prevailing policies based around neoliberal principles. This desire to improve empirically measurable outcomes across a narrow set of curriculum strands ignores the values and feelings of those for whom the zeitgeist is failing, and the longer-term ramifications of this failure on both individuals and on society as a whole. Dewey (1916), more than a hundred years ago, described the best way to develop a strong society was to educate students in social groups made up of individuals from many different backgrounds with many different interests, where the interaction between these individuals was full and free. It is for this that advocates of inclusive education will continue to strive.

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